

To: Honored Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Demicco and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Eliezer Weinbach, Retreat Coordinator at Hazon/Isabella Freedman

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **IN SUPPORT of HJ 1** to adopt the Long Island Sound Blue Plan. As an employee of Hazon, the largest faith-based organization concerned with climate change in America, topics such as this one, which favor scientific and public input on how resources are used, are close to my heart.

Long Island Sound is the Northeast's largest estuary and includes some of the Earth's most productive natural habitats. **The Sound is important to more than 20 million people who live within 50 miles and generates billions annually for local economies through tourism, fishing and other uses.**

This bill can protect both people and the land from unfair use by entities unconcerned with the health of the area's populations – human, animal, and plant. It brings power to the local people by giving them clear, scientific information that they can use to make decisions about the future of their living area. It also provides a way to protect the Long Island Sound from the types of pollution produced by unconcerned businesses that we have seen destroy habitats so often. It is sensible to put laws into place that protect the people from abuses by those seeking to turn a profit.

Without the Long Island Sound Blue Plan, the state has no authority to adequately plan for multiple future uses of the Sound, whether they be recreational, industrial, or developmental. The Blue Plan incorporates **the contributions of nearly 2,000 individuals** from conservation, business, recreation, government, Native American tribes and the public. It is imperative that the committee pass the Long Island Sound Blue Plan in order to proactively protect Long Island Sound while preserving traditional uses, maritime beauty, and environmental values.

I urge the committee to **SUPPORT HJ 1**, and adopt the Long Island Blue Plan. Thank you for your consideration as you deliberate on this bill.

Sincerely,

Eliezer Weinbach

Retreat Coordinator
Isabella Freedman